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ABSTRACT

After a three year review of films on India available in the United States, the Resource Center offered this guide to those motion pictures adjudged best for use in American classrooms. There are twelve documentary films and four commercial feature films included for use at any level of school, college, or university study: Child of the Streets; A Future of Ram; Gandhi (Twentieth Century Series); Gandhi (Biography Series); I Am Twenty; Image of India: The Hindu Way; India: Haunting Passage; Kipling's India; North Indian Village; Radha and Krishna; and, The Sword and the Flute. The feature film section is limited to four Bengali Features, produced and directed by Satyajit Ray, because they are the best and most appropriate for audiences in the United States. SO 001 619 through SO 001 623 are related documents. (Author/SBE)

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MOTION PICTURES FOR THE STUDY OF INDIA

A GUIDE TO CLASSROOM FILMS

BY THEODORE M. VESTAL

The Educational Resources Center

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
NEW DELHI, INDIA

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MOTION PICTURES FOR THE STUDY OF INDIA

Motion pictures bring India (and any other contrasting civilization) to life in the American classroom. Regardless of how eloquent the instructor or how well-read the student, nothing gives the uninitiated individual the "feel" for other peoples, countries, and cultures quite so well as a good film. This medium gets across an intercultural message to a generation which cannot remember a time when there was not a television set in the home in a way far superior to that of the printed word.

There is a wealth of motion pictures on India available in the U.S. After reviewing many of these films during the past three years, the Educational Resources Center offers this guide to those motion pictures adjudged best for use in American classrooms (12 documentary films and four commercial feature films). The evaluation is based on the judgment of the ERC professional staff (Indian and American), visiting consultants, and workshop participants.

In making this study it became clear that:

1. There are many cinematic attempts at presenting the wonder that is or was India, but very few succeed with the high quality sights, sounds, and narrative expected by an American audience.

2. Like a thing of beauty being a joy for ever, an exceptional flick is highly regarded by the fourth grader, the graduate student, and the emeritus professor (each in his own way, of course). This guide, thus, makes no attempt to rate films according to "level". Rather, all of these motion pictures are recommended for use in American schools, colleges, and universities.

3. There is a general lack of knowledge among instructors and professors about what visual resources in Indian studies are available. This suggests that a better communications system on this subject should be developed. The Association

for Asian Studies South Asian Visual Resources Committee should prove to be an important source of information in this area in the future.

4. Distribution of films outside of commercial enterprises and university sources is frequently a problem. ERC is attempting to increase the number of prints of good films available in the U.S. from the Government of India and to facilitate their distribution.

This guide also constitutes a call for assistance. If we have erred in omitting films which you think should be included, please let us know what you would add and why. If we have erred on the side of largesse, we would also like to know.

The commercial feature films section of this guide is limited to four Bengali features, all produced and directed by Satyajit Ray. This is not meant to imply that there are no fine films available in Hindi, Tamil, and other Indian languages which would be useful in the classroom. Rather we feel that the Ray films are the best in this category and most appropriate for audiences in the U.S.

The library of the Educational Resources Center is notably weak on up-to-date film rental catalogs. Hence, Syracuse University's Film Rental Library is mentioned more often than others because its catalog was the most recent one on hand. Additional catalogs would be welcome contributions to ERC's collections.

Another ERC project which we hope to make available soon is an annotated guide to the films most appropriate for the classroom produced by the Films Division of the Government of India. One of our consultants has already viewed 125 of these films.

Dr. James Beveridge, Director of NYU's Institute of Film and Television, has completed the shooting of a series of four films on Indian music for ERC in a project funded in part by the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities.

The Educational Resources Center was established in 1966 under a contract with the U.S. Office of Education. The Center is actively concerned with strengthening material resources useful in teaching about India in American schools, colleges, and universities. Further information on the Center, including lists of materials developed by it, and additional copies of this report are available from

Theodore M. Vestal, Director
Educational Resources Center
D-53 Defence Colony
New Delhi -3, India

October 1970

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REVIEWS OF SELECTED FILMS

(All are 16 mm. unless specified otherwise)

CHILD OF THE STREETS

15 minutes - B & W

Written, produced and directed by Shyam Benegal

A day in the life of a young street sleeper in Bombay showing his daily routine of begging, riding the trains, and struggling to stay alive amidst the urban squalor. One of the best films available on urban living. Produced by one of Bombay's finest young film makers. Received rare notices from the ERC Syracuse Group '69.

A print of Child of the Streets has been purchased by the Educational Resources Center and is available from the New York State Education Department.

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A FUTURE FOR RAM

22 minutes - Color

Written, produced and directed by Dr. Philips Foster

Beautiful color in this first motion picture of a Fulbright agricultural economist. The film defines the agricultural problems faced by a low-income farmer in Northern India. The farmer decides to grow extra crops to make money, instead of just growing enough for his family's consumption, as he usually did. Throughout his attempt to get better seed and fertilizers, the farmer encounters many frustrations that are typical of the farmer in the underdeveloped world. $25.

Available from:

Film Rental Library
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland 20742

GANDHI

27 minutes - B & W
Produced by Burton Benjamin

A CBS News "20th Century" Production traces the Mahatma's rise to importance in India and his struggles in the independence movement, terminating in his assassination in 1948. Mainly composed of newsreel shots, this film superbly records Gandhi's role in the Salt March, the Round Table Conference, and Independence Day. $6.

OR

GANDHI

26 minutes - B & W
Produced by David Wolper. From the award-winning Biography Series

Newsreel footage of Gandhi's role in several key moments of modern Indian history including his time in prison and dramatic examples of his non-violent defiance of the British. $6.

Both available from:

Alden Films
5113 16th Avenue
Brooklyn
New York 11204

Or

Film Rental Library
Syracuse University
1455 East Colvin Street
Syracuse, New York 13210

I AM TWENTY

15 minutes - B & W
Films Division, Government of India

A series of interviews with young men and women in their twentieth year filmed during India's twentieth year of independence. The viewer is given insights into the diversity of attitudes, aspirations, and plans for the future of a cross-section of Indian young people.

"The best single film now available for revealing glimpses of the complex panorama of contemporary India."

- Elgin Heinz
(ERC Consultant '69)
Curriculum Specialist for Asian Studies
Unified School District
San Francisco, California

Available from:

The Consul General of India
3 East 64th Street
New York, New York 10021

IMAGE INDIA: THE HINDU WAY

11 films - Color - Teacher's guide for each
Written, produced and directed by Dr. H. Daniel Smith.

Dr. Smith, Professor of Comparative Religion at Syracuse University, while in India under an American Institute of Indian Studies faculty research fellowship, worked with ERC in preparing a series of films on Hindu ways of worship. Filmed in Madras within the Tengalai brahmin community of Srivaisnavas.

The individual films are:

1.	How a Hindu Worships: At the Home Shrine	18 Min. $190
2.	Hindu Temple Rites: Bathing the Image of God	13 Min. $140
3.	Pilgrimage to a Hindu Temple	14 Min. $150
4.	Hindu Procession to the Sea	8 Min. $100
*5.	The Hindu Sacraments of Childhood: The First Five Years	25 Min. $200
6.	The Hindu Sacrament of Thread Investiture	14 Min. $150
7.	Hindu Devotions at Dawn	10 Min. $110
8.	Hindu Sacrament of Surrender	8 Min. $100
9.	Hindu Family Celebration: Sixtieth Birthday	9 Min. $100
10.	Monthly Ancestral Offerings in Hinduism	8 Min. $100
11.	Radha's Day: Hindu Family Life	17 Min. $180

*Also available as a 7 film Super 8 film loop series. $132.

"These films have been prepared with sensitivity and skill to make it possible for students who have never been to India to understand something of the meaning and vitality of contemporary Hindu practices. They have been made available in a form readily adaptable to imaginative classroom teaching."

- Kenneth W. Morgan
Department of Religion
Colgate University

For rental details and descriptive brochure on the films, write:

Film Rental Library
Syracuse University
1455 East Colvin Street
Syracuse, New York 13210

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INDIA: HAUNTING PASSAGE

60 minutes - B & W
Produced by Standard Oil Co. (N.J.)

A three part film with (1) a sitar recital by Ravi Shankar; (2) an excerpt from the Ramayana performed by Indian puppets; and (3) a drama directed by Shewajit Ray which contrasts the play world of two Indian boys, one rich and one poor. First rate introduction to Indian culture. $16.

Available from:

Modern Talking Picture
Service Inc.
1212 Sixth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10036

AN INDIAN DAY (formerly India '67)

52 minutes - Color 1967
Produced by S. Sukhdev
Films Division, Government of India

The sights and sounds of India in a beautifully photographed tour of virtually all parts of the nation. A vivid montage for the person who has been in India; a sense-assaulting survey of the variety of life in the sub-continent for the uninitiated. Part of the fun is in figuring out what is going on in a particular sequence. The answers are not spelled out for the viewer. An excellent film with which to end up a workshop or a course on India.

Available free from:

The Consul General of India
3 East 64th Street
New York, New York 10021

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KIPLING'S INDIA (an excerpt from MGM's Kim)

20 minutes - Color - Teachers' Guide

Visualizes the people, places and customs of nineteenth century India. Kim, an orphan waif, travels with a Buddhist lama on the Grand Trunk Road encountering all types of people, including maharajahs, holy men, cult worshippers, beggars, merchants, adventurers, and soldiers. Dean Stockwell and Paul Lukas star. $6.75

Available from:

Film Rental Library
Syracuse University
1455 East Colvin Street
Syracuse, New York 13210

Distributed by Teaching Film Custodians, Inc., 25 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. Licensed at $150 for three years.

NORTH INDIAN VILLAGE

32 minutes - Color
Produced by P.J. & J.T. Hitchcock

A study of the village of Khalapur between 1953 and 1955, produced by a Cornell University India Program. This film explores hereditary occupations of castes, forms of worship and ceremony, marriage, and changes in a "typical" village of Uttar Pradesh. $8.25

Available from:

Film Rental Library
Syracuse University
1455 East Colvin Street
Syracuse, New York 13210

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RADHA AND KRISHNA

22 minutes - Color
Directed by Jehangir Bhownagary
Films Division, Government of India

The legend of Radha and Krishna as seen in miniature paintings of Pahari artists of the 18th century. Excellent music, photography, and narrative explain the symbolism of this immortal legend and Pahari life. The film traces the events of Lord Krishna's life including his birth, life in Brindavan with the Gopis and his fulfilment of divine mission. The film illustrates the quest of the soul for God as symbolized in woman's love for man.

"This film would make an excellent corollary to The Love of Krishna by Archer and Krishna - the Story of Gokul Brindavan Krishna, ERC's slide and sound presentation."

Jean Johnson
The Groton Indian Humanities Project

Available free from:

The Consul General of India
3 East 64th Street, New York

THE SWORD AND THE FLUTE

22 minutes - Color

Written, produced and directed by James Ivory.

Life in Moghul India is explored through Moghul and Rajput miniature paintings. The main themes are:

1. life in the Moghul court (16th-18th centuries) showing the daily routine and special festivals;

2. life of the ascetic in search of enlightenment;

3. courtly love; and

4. the spiritual love of Lord Krishna and Radha.

A magnificent combination of color, music, and narration. $10.

"The film is an excellent exercise in inductive teaching and illustrates how historical and sociological knowledge can be induced from the art of an historical period."

Dr. Donald Johnson
(ERC Consultant '69-70)
Professor of Social Science
New York University

Available from:

Film Images Inc.,
1860 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10023

FEATURE FILMS

Commercial feature films are long and expensive compared to other films reviewed in this study, but they provide insights into Indian culture and life which are difficult to produce by other media. Besides, most Americans, having grown up with the movies frequently gain more from a two-hour feature film than from two weeks of lectures and discussions. The film is, of course, much more than a teaching device. It is one of the creative arts and an important source of social documentation.

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PATHER PANCHALI B & W

APARAJITO

APURSANSAR ("The World of Apu") B & W

These three titles were produced and directed by Satyajit Ray, who has won universal acclaim. His films have been awarded many international prizes and he is today considered to be of the same genre as Ingmar Bergman, Alan Resnais and others.

Pather Panchali deals with a family in a Bengal village, their poverty and suffering, the tensions of tradition and change brought out with poetic intensity and vision. Ravi Shankar's sitar music enlivens the sound track with rapturous sound. Aparajito and Apursansar -- these two films carry the story of the same family out of the village into the environs of the city of Calcutta. Here the children have grown. The boy has become a man. Then marriage, death, love and tenderness. Poignant, stark and compelling.

Although these three films compose a triology, each is a classic in its own right and can be shown independently of the others.

MAHANAGAR B & W

Mahanagar ("The City") is another Ray film, depicting life in Calcutta. The pressures of the urban environment and traditional values play havoc with a joint family. The trouble begins when the heroine takes on a job as a sewing machine saleslady to contribute to the support of the family. Further complications arise when her husband loses his employment. A realistic portrayal of the Bengali city dweller.

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Rental prices for commercial feature films vary according to the type and size of audience and other variables. Details of rental conditions and prices will be supplied by the distributors.

PATHER PANCHALI

APARAJITO

MAHANAGAR ("The City")

Available from:

Audio Film Center
2138 East 75th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60649

APURSANSAR (The World of Apu)

Available from:

Brandon Films, Inc.,
221 West 75th Street
New York, N.Y. 10019

- - -

Other Bengali feature films of merit, which are available from Audio Film Center, are:

DEVI ("The Goddess") B & W
KANCHENJUNGHA - Color (Ray's first color film)
THE MUSIC ROOM B & W

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Educational Resources Center
P. O. Box 3026
New Delhi-3, India